

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SELECTMEN

TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD,

FOR 1877-78.

TIMES PRESS,
GREENFIELD, MASS.,
1878.

TREASURER'S REPORT

From Feb. 17, 1877, to Feb. 16, 1878.

RECEIPTS.

Cash on hand February 17, 1877.....	\$ 1,917 50
Received of R. K. Caldwell, collector.....	7,538 08
“ “ selectmen, money borrowed.....	1,200 00
“ “ state of Mass. bank tax.....	664 42
“ “ “ “ “ corporation tax.....	438 72
“ “ “ “ “ school fund.....	230 21
“ “ “ “ “ state aid.....	125 00
“ for county dog fund.....	126 80
“ “ interest on surplus revenue.....	49 27
“ “ liquor license, Chas. Osgood.....	50 00
“ “ “ “ “ Lewis T. Webster.....	50 00
“ “ “ “ “ James Pickard.....	100 00
“ “ auctioneer's license, Wm Brazee.....	2 00
“ “ “ “ “ R. K. Caldwell.....	2 00
“ “ state of Mass. pauper.....	48 00
“ “ “ “ “ pauper transport.....	1 95
Total.....	\$12,543 95

DISBURSEMENTS.

Paid Atwood & Noyes, printing.....	\$	33	00
" outstanding orders drawn by school committee.....		328	72
" drawn by selectmen to March 1, 1877.....		407	80
" town officers' bill for 1876.....		334	57
" orders drawn by school committee.....		2,595	64
" " " " selectmen.....		5,437	53
" county tax.....		1,288	24
" state "		645	00
" " aid.....		174	00
" " treasurer one-fourth liquor license.....		50	00
" Worcester lunatic hospital support, Mary Pierson.....		183	51
" state reform school for support of Willie Murphy.....		52	00
Cash in hands of treasurer.....		1,013	94
Total.....		\$12,543	95

ELIAS LYMAN, Treasurer.



We have examined the accounts of Elias Lyman, treasurer of Northfield, and find them correct and properly vouched for.

CHARLES H. GREEN,	} Selectmen of Northfield.
SAMUEL G. PRATT,	
ROSWELL HOLTON,	



ASSESSOR'S REPORT.

Number of polls.....	475
“ “ dwelling houses.....	384
“ “ horses.....	355
“ “ cows.....	536
“ “ sheep....	388
“ “ acres of land assessed.....	19847

Total valuation of personal estate.....	\$ 98,605 00
“ “ “ real estate.....	595,545 00
Total.....	\$ 694,150 00

Total amount of taxes assessed	\$ 7,538 08
Rate per cent.....	95

TOWN ASSESSMENT FOR 1877.

For schools.....	\$ 2,500 00
“ highways and bridges.....	1,800 00
“ contingent expenses.....	1,000 00
“ state tax.....	645 00
“ county tax.....	1,288 24
“ overlay	304 84
Total.....	\$ 7,538 08

SELECTMEN'S REPORT.

TOWN OFFICERS' BILLS.

L. T. Webster, services as selectman.....	.\$	87	32
Samuel G. Pratt " " "		88	75
Roswell Holton " " "		72	50
R. C. Ward " " school committee		80	00
J. L. Banks " on auditing.....		2	00
Elias Lyman " " "		2	00
Ira Coy " " "		2	00
Total.....	.\$	334	57

MISCELLANEOUS.

George Alexander, repairing scraper.....	.\$	1	35
George H. Ryther, services as town clerk.....		2	50
M. M. Stebbins, support of state pauper.....		20	00
Overseers of the poor of Prescott.....		11	82
Coffin refrigerator.....		38	50
S. O. Lamb, for services from 1873 to 1877.....		44	00
R. C. Ward, services to state pauper.....		5	00
O. T. Greenleaf, support of watering trough 3 years.....		4	50
Benjamin Davis, amount allowed by auditing committee.....		3	00
L. T. Webster, for services rendered as per bill.....		9	00
Freight on coffin refrigerator.....		1	08
Asa A. Holton, wood furnished to Lucretia Belknap.....		27	00
E. Howard, cleaning and repairing town clock.....		19	75
W. C. Reed, work on town house.....		7	20
R. C. Fisher, repairs on town house.....		4	00
Charles T. Preston, sundries, as per bill.....		9	85
C. T. Bartlett, repairs on town house		43	60
Rockwood & Brook, for books furnished the town.....		68	00
F. H. Turner, painting town hall.....		27	25
Nelson Burrows, insuring town house.....		20	00
W. J. Phelps, repairing plows.....		3	75
H. W. Day, building tomb... ..		325	00
Mrs. S. W. G. Cook, abatement on taxes....		9	50
Samuel Holton, work in town house.....		1	50
R. K. Caldwell, abatement of taxes for 1876.....		5	50
Charles Pomeroy, abatement of taxes on Perry farm.....		4	73
" " error on taxes.....		1	42

M. C. Miller, for building part of pine meadow road.....	..\$ 300 00
T. W. Whitney, wood for town house.....	23 69
A. M. Moody, work on town house.....	12 35
Asa A. Holton, stone posts and work in cemetery.....	38 87
City of Springfield, support of Connolly children.....	66 85
F. H. Turner, painting cemetery fence.....	63 50
W. J. Phelps, iron work on cemetery fence.....	8 20
Estate of Betsy Wright, abatement of taxes.....	14 25
Henry Wright, work on cemetery fence.....	32 50
Samuel G. Pratt, work and money paid out, as per bill.....	21 59
H. B. Parker, work and support of watering trough.....	4 58
A. C. Parsons, paint and oil.....	28 00
Henry Johnson, abatement of highway tax on Perry farm.....	4 73
E. H. Colton, error in taxes.....	7 66
E. O. Wheeler, support of watering trough.....	3 00
E. H. Starkey, iron work on cemetery fence.....	1 44
L. T. Webster, for plough furnished in 1876.....	15 00
“ goods furnished Mrs. Lucretia Belknap.....	40 15
“ “ “ William Reed's family.....	35 05
“ “ “ the town, as per bill.....	69 30
Roswell Holton, work on new tomb.....	9 50
Charles H. Green, money paid out for work on cemetery fence, as per bill.....	104 94
Elias Lyman, services as town treasurer.....	40 00
“ “ “ “ “ clerk, and cash paid for sundries as per bill.....	47 90
A. K. Francis, for building cemetery fence.....	314 00
R. K. Caldwell, abatement poor men's taxes.....	58 50
“ services as constable.....	9 50
“ discount on taxes.....	250 02
Charles H. Green, goods furnished Wm. Reed's family.....	9 40
J. L. Preston, support of the poor.....	566 07
George W. Page, for keeping 633 tramps.....	158 33
E. H. Stewart, building Pine Meadow road.....	1,017 00
Charles H. Green, for money paid on account of town at differ- ent times, as per bill.....	82 86
Henry Wright, 2d, care of town hall.....	29 75
“ “ “ clock.....	15 00
“ mowing cemetery.....	7 00
“ making returns of deaths.....	4 75
“ driving hearse.....	28 50
“ two brooms for town hall.....	80
Lucretia Belknap, cash.....	20 00
Total miscellaneous.....	\$ 4,283 33

HIGHWAYS.

Amount of money expended by the surveyors in each district in the town :

District No.	1, David T. Long.....	\$ 128 12
" "	2, Charles W. Webster.....	173 80
" "	3, John Wright, \$93.09; Geo. R. Stebbins, \$9 17 :	102 26
" "	4, B. F. Streeter.....	142 05
" "	5, Sumner Titus.....	138 38
" "	6, Franklin Whithed....	83 07
" "	7, Ansel Collar.....	60 93
" "	8, Dwight E. Bass, \$88.79; J. A. Dresser, \$17 55 :	106 34
" "	9, A. L. Pickett.....	53 35
" "	10, William Burrows.....	49 12
" "	11, John H Robbins.....	152 95
Total.....		\$ 1,190 35
Bridge timber, plank, and railing, used in common by the highway surveyors.....		180 35
Amount of work done on highways previous to March 6, 1877..		73 72
Total highway expense.....		\$ 1,444 42



TOTAL PAID FOR THE YEAR.

Town officers' bills.....	\$ 334 57
Miscellaneous payments.....	4,283 33
Highways	1,444 42
Total.....	<u>\$ 6,062 32</u>
Income from the town hall from Feb. 27, 1877, to Feb. 14, 1878	
	126 00

Eighty-five and 80-100 dollars of this sum has been taken by Henry Wright, 2d, as pay for his services for taking care of the town hall and town clock, driving the hearse, mowing cemetery, making returns of deaths, and brooms for the town house, he not having drawn any money from the treasury for the above work.

FINANCIAL CONDITION OF THE TOWN, February 18, 1878.

DUE AS PER AUDITOR'S REPORT.

SELECTMEN'S BILLS.

Charles H. Green.....	\$	94 00	
Samuel G. Pratt.....		87 00	
Roswell Holton.....		58 74	
Total.....			\$ 239 74

SCHOOL COMMITTEE BILLS.

Dr. M. S. Mead.....	\$	70 75	
Mrs. E. S. G. Lyman.....		8 00	
Total.....			78 75

AUDITOR'S BILLS.

E. E. Belding.....		2 00	
Ira Coy.....		2 00	
J. L. Banks.....		2 00	
Total.....			6 00

DEBTS OUTSTANDING.

C. H. Green's note and interest.....		1,244 40	
E. H. Stewart, for building Pine Meadow road.....		183 00	
Total.....			\$ 1,751 89
Balance in the treasury.....	\$	1,013 94	
Due from estate of Percis Lamb.....		364 35	
“ “ town of Shutesbury.....		44 10	
“ for use of town hall.....		40 20	
“ from estate of Mary Connolly.....		66 85	
“ “ Henry Wright, 2d, interest on note.....		54 32	
“ “ “ “ for support of Mrs. Marsh.....		26 60	
Total.....			\$ 1,610 36
Indebtedness of the town.....			\$ 141 53

CHARLES H. GREEN,	}	Selectmen of Northfield.
SAMUEL G. PRATT,		
ROSWELL HOLTON,		

REPORT OF OVERSEERS OF THE POOR.

The following persons are now, and have been during the past year, fully supported by the town :

William Webster, age 90 ; Hubbard Phelps, 77 ; Adaline Field, 75 ; Lucretia Sawyer, 45. These have been supported at Mr. Preston's own house ; and, at this time, in addition to the above, he has Jennie Lord and child.

The following persons have been partially supported :

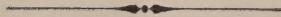
Jessie Kimplin, Mrs. Marsh, John Cutting and family, Clarence Collar, George Turner, Mrs. Horace Robbins and son, Mrs. Park, Lock Doolittle and son, Marshall Morgan and family, and George A. Wright, making some twenty persons who have been partially supported by Mr. Preston during the past year.

CHARLES H. GREEN,	} Overseers
SAMUEL G. PRATT,	
ROSWELL HOLTON,	
	} of
	} the poor.

Northfield, February 18, 1878.

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF THE TOWN OF
NORTHFIELD,

FOR 1877-78.



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1878.

REPORT OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

In presenting this report to the inhabitants of Northfield, we do not feel called upon to theorize extensively upon the great subject of education. The tiresome platitudes which the people of this commonwealth have annually set before them, in the shape of School "Reports" in too many instances, warns us to exercise the grace of brevity, at least. Doubtless this community is not wholly indifferent to the benefits which the state derives from its schools of all sorts of grades. A certain distinguished man, not long ago, said that to open a common school is to close a common jail. This may not be true to the letter, but in the apothegm is contained a deep-seated truth. It is to be hoped that that class of citizens, who are our heaviest tax-payers, but have no children to send to school, are fully alive to the fact that our common schools have a most preservative and conservative influence upon the commonwealth and nation, and that without them their persons and property would be somewhat insecure. It is probably true that many of the parents and guardians in Northfield have the proper education of their children and wards near at heart. Yet there is a strange indifference, evidently, in certain quarters. Parents do not visit the schools; they do not sympathize with and encourage the teachers; they are penurious and fault-finding as to school books, and they are too prone to mould their opinions concerning the qualifications and success of teachers, from the glibly uttered opinions of their children alone. Your committee are quite constant attendants upon the services of one of our churches, and occasional attendants upon those of the other; but they do not remember to have ever heard, in either one, our schools, teachers and committee prayed for. If there are any fit subjects for prayer, surely these are—especially the committee!

TEACHERS.

Your committee have to say that, in their judgment, they have been fortunate, in the main, in the selection of their corps of teachers the past year. They have endeavored to secure such as they thought would prove to be, in every sense, instructors, adapted to incite the habit of thinking, and incourage proper and hearty expression on the part of their pupils—instructors, not task masters, having a hearty sympathy with childhood, and a lively personal interest in the more advanced pupils. May the happy day soon dawn when our common school teachers, even in our more rural communities, shall not only be amply qualified to “teach all the branches that the law directs,” but have the faculty of imparting instruction, with the heart not only to guide the bright, intellectual scholars, but on the alert to encourage and care for the dull and less mentally favored. The pecuniary resource is not all the model teacher receives. There is the future reward—the abiding esteem of the pupils who have grown up to manhood and womanhood. Laborious industry and patient forbearance should be the motto adopted by the man or woman the moment they enter the portals of the noble profession—teaching. The cross, sour-visaged teacher is an iceberg stranded in a flower garden, chilling all the beauty and brightness out of the happy flowers, and congealing the music in the very throats of the rejoicing birds. Again, insipid garrulity, unseemly familiarity of the teacher toward the scholars in and out of school, and undignified deportment generally, should be avoided. There is a sensible, happy medium. The faithful, intelligent instructor understands this. Teachers have a joyous range; do they all realize it?

THE SCHOOLS.

For the most part, we have been satisfied with our schools, and think we can safely report progress in regard to all the ten schools that have been under our care. Had we the space, we should be pleased to particularize each school, and mention two or three which would rank with those of some of our more ambitious towns. So far as the knowledge of your committee goes, every thing has gone along smoothly and quietly. There has not been the slightest outbreak among scholars; neither have we been

obliged to discharge any of our teachers. It is a misfortune that the standard of the public schools of Northfield is not higher. We have been going, and are going, in some very ancient ruts. Whether we shall ever get out of them, it remains to be seen. For instance, tardiness and absence makes a lamentable show upon our school registers. Parents only can remedy this crying evil.

TEXT BOOKS.

Your committee have thought it proper to introduce new reading books, the Franklin readers, and a series of language lessons, Swinton's, in the place of the old grammars. The old reading books had been in use eighteen years; the grammars for a generation, with no uniformity at that. We have tried to make United States history a branch of study in our schools, as the law enjoins. With these changes that have been made, we think there need be no further introduction of new text books for some years to come. In the matter of the introduction of the above school books we feel that we have acted conscientiously. Some people have the idea that the school committee "make money" from the introduction of new books. So far as this committee is concerned, they have to say that not one cent's interest accrued, or is to accrue to them, directly or indirectly from the premises. It is no small task, and a very thankless one in many instances, for a committee to examine and decide upon the merits of the quantities of books that are urged upon them by importunate agents. The responsibility for the branches of study pursued by the pupil in our schools, under the present school system as adopted by the town, rests wholly with the committee, and not with the children or parents. The committee have no legal right to omit any of the studies required to be taught by law. Even teachers who can not pass an examination in drawing, can not be legally employed by committees. We desire to call attention to the illegal neglect, on the part of the town, to provide school books at cost, and to designate some proper depository.

MORALS OF PUPILS.

One great argument in favor of parish and private schools, is that the pupils are more secure from contact with depraved and

vicious mates. Teachers should see to it, and parents should act in conjunction with them, that profaneness and indecency, roughness, cruelty and incivility, attempted to be practiced in and about the school-house, are nipped in the bud. Your committee are forced to the unwelcome opinion that bad morals, in the direction indicated, not infrequently germinate in or about the common school houses of our land. Our more experienced teachers, in many instances, are alive to this subject, and with some pains and a happy tact, seek to subdue these embryotic ebullitions of nature (?), and to cultivate in their pupils all social virtues. Parents should endeavor to impress upon the minds of their children the propriety of a gentle, grateful, and respectful deportment toward teachers.

THE PRESENT SCHOOL SYSTEM.

From a somewhat extensive acquaintance with the administration of public schools in other and larger communities, and some acquaintance with the temper and attitude of this community in regard to the conduct of our schools, the general tone of the public respecting education in general, your committee would reluctantly advise a return to the district system, *provided it could be done without a special act of legislation*. By Act of 1870, Chap. 196, towns were authorized to re-establish school districts at any meeting called for that purpose, "*within two years from the passage of this act,*" by a two-thirds vote. This act took effect April 22, 1870. The Act of 1873, Chap. 95. authorized towns to abolish school districts that had been re-established. There has been no law since 1870, authorizing towns to re-establish school districts. The two years mentioned in the Act of 1870, having expired, no town can now re-establish its school districts. To the opinion that the old system, *i. e.*, the district system, would be better for the town of Northfield, our lady associate, Mrs. Lyman, dissents.

THE "MOUNTAIN" SCHOOLS.

As a matter of simple justice, and in order to avoid litigation, your committee have reopened the school in District No. 11, and increased the school terms in District No. 5. The inhabitants of the eastern portion of our town, although the scholars are few,

surely have their rights under the school laws of the commonwealth, and in the absence of a legal consolidation of districts, can as surely sue out a writ of *mandamus* against the town, when deprived of the requisite number of weeks' schooling under the statute.

SANITARY.

Your committee deem it their bounden duty to call attention to the filthy condition of the out-buildings attached or in close proximity to nearly all of our school houses. In some instances the condition of these buildings is shocking—not fit for the use of the lower order of animals. In one district, the deposits had not been removed for a period of six years! The sickening and pestilential odors (and this is not the only instance) not only prevailed through the school-room, but pervaded the atmosphere of the entire neighborhood. It is well known that zymotic diseases are frequently caused by these oftentimes fatal emanations. It should be the duty of the prudential committee in each district, to cause deposits to be removed once a term at least, and dry earth used frequently during term time. The building itself should be kept scrupulously clean.

For the Board,

CHARLES T. PRESTON, Secretary.

M. S. MEADE, M. D., Chairman.

MRS. ELIJAH LYMAN.

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NOTE.—C. T. Preston's bill of \$48.00, for services as school committee, has been allowed by the auditors. It was handed in too late to be printed in the selectmen's report.

FINANCES.

COST OF MAINTAINING SCHOOLS.

DISTRICT No. 1.

Teacher's wages and board.....	\$	448 00
Wood		44 00
Care of room and repairs.....		18 75
Total.....	\$	510 75
Number of weeks school, 28.		

DISTRICT No. 2.

Teacher's wages and board.....	\$	242 50
Wood		22 80
Care of room and repairs.....		6 55
Total.....	\$	271 85
Number of weeks school, 28.		

DISTRICT No. 3.

Teacher's wages and board.....	\$	224 00
Wood		25 00
Care of room and repairs.....		6 75
Total.....	\$	255 75
Number of weeks school, 27.		

DISTRICT No. 4.

Teacher's wages and board	220 00
Wood.....	36 30
Care of room and repairs.....	6 25
Total....	\$ 262 55
Number of weeks school, 28.	

DISTRICT No. 5.

Teacher's wages and board.....	117 00
Care of room and repairs.....	4 50
Total.....	121 50
Number of weeks school, 18.	

DISTRICT No. 6.

Teacher's wages and board.....	156 00
Care of room and repairs.....	2 60
Total.....	\$ 158 60
Number of weeks school, 26.	